(e) Following measures have been taken to reduce cost of production of steel to make the industry competitive:

(i) Upgradation/modernisation of public sector steel plants.

(ii) Encouraging research and development activities with financial assistance from Steel Development Fund (SDF).

(iii) Encouragement to reduction in energy consumption.

Referring SAIL to BIFR

2917. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government arc planning to refer Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) to BIFR; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Popularisation of sports

† 2918. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is rampant corruption in national sports, from selection to the play fields;

(b) whether it is also a fact that rural boys are deprived of the opportunities to show their talents, despite being talented; and

(c) if so, whether Government would adopt a common policy for rural areas and metropolitan cities and formulate any concrete policy to popularise the sports world?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise. However, under the new National Sports Policy 2001, emphasis has been given on "broadbasing" of sports and "Achieving Excellence in sports at National and International levels." The Policy accords high priority to tapping talent in the rural and tribal areas.

Sports programmes in NER

2919. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 290, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 17 December. 1999 and state:

(a) the salient features and implementation status of special sports package for NER; and

(b) the implementation status of various other ongoing programmes in NER and the programmes envisaged for implementation during the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) There is no special sports package for North-Eastern Region. However, Sports Authority of India is implementing various schemes such as National Sports Talent Constest Scheme (NSTC), Special Area Games (SAG), SAI Training Centres (STC), Centre of Excellence (COE), Army Boys Sports Company (ABSC) and North-East Sports Festival for the promotion and development of sports in North-Eastern Region. The implementation status of the schemes is at Statement I to V. *(See* below) These schemes will also be implemented during the Tenth Five Year Plan.